

who is an active member of the Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus and the House Trade Working Group.

On May 10, the Administration and Members of this House announced a "New Policy on Trade."

It's about time. Democrats have been calling for a new direction in trade for years. Finally, the Administration appears to be listening to these calls for improved provisions to protect workers, their families, and the environment. I applaud the baby steps the Administration has taken. But the Administration needs to take giant leaps to improve on its current, failing approach to trade.

This new "deal" on trade covers changes to certain provisions of the Bush-negotiated Free Trade Agreements, FTAs, with Peru and Panama. Though we have seen outlines and summaries of this new "deal" on trade, we have not seen the final, legal text. Yet we have been asked to trust the Administration's promises and support this new "deal."

To those of us in Congress who have been working to champion the rights of American working families and begin a new approach to trade, the Administration's promises sound awfully familiar.

And when I say awful, I mean awful.

Each time this Administration has presented one of its trade schemes to Congress, it has promised us that the agreement includes all sorts of so-called "innovative" worker protections. We heard this over and over again during the debate on the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

But the fact is, no matter what label you use to describe them, the so-called labor protections in CAFTA were disappointingly weak. For example, under CAFTA, countries can down-grade their own labor laws, without facing any trade penalties or sanctions.

Allowing our partners in free trade deals to erode their own labor standards is unfair to our workers here at home, who can't possibly compete with workers who are denied basic workplace rights, who are paid two dollars a day, or who face forced labor—as our own State Department reported was the case in Oman.

CAFTA passed the House by the narrowest of margins at a time when it was Republican controlled. You would think that the Administration would have gotten the message that it needed to do better.

You would think the Administration would have realized that from then on, it should include more of us in the process and work out a different type of trade deal.

But unfortunately no one was listening. Since CAFTA, we've seen the same weak labor provisions in the Oman FTA.

And now we are asked to have faith that the Administration has really turned over a new leaf? That enforceable labor and environmental standards will be included in the text of the Peru and Panama agreements?

I have faith in many things, but not in these promises.

This Administration has lost my faith. It has lied too many times, about too many things: that Iraq posed an imminent danger, that the mission in Iraq was accomplished, that at least nine U.S. attorneys were fired because they were incompetent, that the air around ground zero was safe to breathe, that we have not been experiencing any change in our climate.

Perhaps more importantly, even if these agreements are the best written, fairest trade

agreements possible, so long as they rely on this Administration to enforce the labor and environmental standards they contain, they are not worth the paper they are written on.

This Administration has failed to protect workers here in the United States. The BP Texas City explosion, the Sago Mine Disaster, and the 9/11 first responders and clean-up workers who have developed serious breathing ailments—these are just the most notorious examples of this Administration's relinquishment of its responsibilities to provide even the most basic protection to workers: the right to work in a safe environment.

And that's not even mentioning the Administration's opposition to increasing the minimum wage, to protecting pensions and Social Security, and to ensuring that workers have the right to organize.

The Bush trade deal would give private corporations the ability to take action on their own to protect their rights. It would not, however, extend that same power to workers, who would have to rely on the Bush Administration to do that for them.

Trust this Administration to protect working American families? I don't think so. This new trade deal—like the previous bad deals—is a one-sided raw deal for workers.

We're continually told that NAFTA-style free trade will create more wealth in all the countries involved. Yet NAFTA-style free trade has meant the loss of jobs as those jobs have been shipped overseas.

Just as trickle-down economics proved to be a failure at lifting people out of poverty, the current free trade model has also proved to be a failure. Since NAFTA, the real income of working families has been on the decline or stagnant at best.

The middle class is getting squeezed from all directions. Downward pressure on wages is being accompanied by higher health care costs, higher gas prices, and higher education costs.

It's high time to develop a new trade policy that works for working families. American workers came out in droves in the last election, and they voted for a new majority. As part of the new majority, we owe it to them to stand with them for fair trade. To stand with them in creating a new America.

This is possible.

Fair trade is an option.

If we stand united for working Americans, we can deliver a real new deal on trade, not warmed over hash masquerading as caviar. You know the old saying about putting lipstick on a pig? Well, I smell bacon. I don't have to read the complete text of the deal to read between the lines.

The bottom line is this: minor adjustments to NAFTA-style deals are not good enough.

No more agreements based on the failed NAFTA model.

No more "Fast Track" trade negotiation authority.

We cannot give this Administration or future ones a blank check on trade deals that devastate our communities.

Trade can benefit our economy and the economies of our trading partners. We can negotiate deals that create new markets, bringing new jobs and new prosperity. We can achieve significant new foreign market access and reduce our trade deficit.

But to do so, we must embark on a new path. Not a slight detour from our current direction.

I challenge Republicans and Democrats, employers and employees, all those who care about shared prosperity in this country, and not just the rich getting richer, to work together to embark on this entirely new journey to fair trade.

COMMEMORATING AZERBAIJAN'S REPUBLIC DAY

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise as a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and member of the House Azerbaijan Caucus, to honor the people of the Republic of Azerbaijan—a strong strategic partner and ally not only to the United States but also among the democratic nations of our world—as they prepare to celebrate Republic Day on May 28.

Republic Day commemorates the day Azerbaijan first declared independence from the Russian Empire in 1918—becoming the first ever Muslim democratic republic. Although the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic only lasted 2 short years, succumbing to Soviet forces in 1920, in its 2 years of independence Azerbaijan made great strides in areas such as state building, education, and economic growth. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was even ahead of the United States in terms of granting suffrage to women; which didn't happen here in the U.S. until 1920.

Azerbaijan's second opportunity for freedom and independence began in 1990 when Azerbaijanis began openly gathering in protest against Soviet rule. Tragically, January 1990 will forever be known to all Azerbaijanis as Black January, as these peaceful demonstrations were crushed by Soviet intervention at a cost of over a hundred and thirty civilians' lives.

Yet even in the face of such brutality Azerbaijanis never gave up their dream of freedom and independence and following the final collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan quickly declared its re-independence.

By August 30, 1991, a free Azerbaijan's Parliament adopted the Declaration on the Restoration of the State of Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and on October 18, 1991, the Constitution was approved.

Having lived under Soviet rule, the people of Azerbaijan have a great appreciation of living in a democratic civil society and since its re-independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan has been an invaluable ally in the Global War on Terror; committing both their human resources and their leadership to the fight. Azerbaijan was among the first nations—Muslim and non-Muslim—to offer unconditional support to the United States in the war against terrorism; providing airspace and the use of its airports for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Today, Azerbaijan peacekeeping troops continue to serve with distinction in Kabul under the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force.

Azerbaijanis have also fought shoulder-to-shoulder with our troops in the second front in the war against terrorism, Iraq. In fact, Azerbaijan—in another first—was the first Muslim nation to join the Coalition and send troops to Iraq.

Finally, Azerbaijan has joined all 12 international conventions on counter-terrorism and continues to support regional cooperation on fighting terrorism through numerous local agreements as well as its participation in the activities of regional organizations such as NATO, the Organization for Security in Europe and others.

Azerbaijan has also assumed an important political role in the fight against terrorism and tyranny. As a founding member of the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development—whose namesake members include Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova—Azerbaijan has been a leading voice on enhanced regional economic cooperation through development of a Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor; and a facilitator for discussion on various levels of existing security problems, promoting conflict resolution and the elimination of other risks and threats, such as illegal trafficking and border security.

I believe that the past several years have proven that the people and government of Azerbaijan are committed to democracy. They have taken a bold and courageous stand for freedom and democracy by committing troops and resources to the fights in Afghanistan and Iraq. They have expended their political capital to bring different nations together in their region, and abroad, to peacefully organize and build, through democratic institutions and commerce, a safer world.

Madam Speaker, I would ask all of my colleagues to join me now to thank the people of Azerbaijan for their friendship, to congratulate them on the 89th Anniversary of Republic Day and to renew our commitment to further develop and strengthen the bonds between our two peoples.

AIR INDIA INQUIRY QUESTIONED

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, recently a Canadian writer and editor named Dr. Awatar Singh Sekhon, Managing Editor of the International Journal of Sikh Affairs, wrote a detailed response to an article about the 1985 Air India bombings. As you know, those bombings continue to be controversial more than 20 years later and the Canadian government is launching yet another inquiry into the matter.

Dr. Sekhon's quite comprehensive letter, which was written in response to an Edmonton Sun article, is very detailed. It makes a very strong argument and brings up a lot of very important information on the case. Before I put it into the RECORD, I will attempt to summarize the highlights.

Dr. Sekhon points out that Indian diplomat Mani Shankar says that in 1984, the year before the bombing, the Indira Gandhi government in India commissioned him "to portray Sikhs as terrorists." This directive occurred before Operation Bluestar, the June 1984 attack on the golden Temple in amritsar (the seat of Sikhism) and several other Sikh Gurdwaras around Punjab, in which 20,000 Sikhs, including over 100 Sikh youth ages 8 to 13, were killed and the Sikh holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, was desecrated by being

shot with Indian Army bullets. The orders for that operation were given in January 1984, according to the Sikh Bulletin, October–November 1985. The Air India operation was part of that campaign. In addition, the newspaper Hitavada reported that the Indian government paid the late governor of Punjab, Surendra Nath, the equivalent of \$1.5 billion to foment terrorist activity in Punjab and Kashmir.

Dr. Sekhon refers to the first hijacking of an Air India plane by two Brahmin brothers named Pandey to secure Indira Gandhi's release from jail. He notes the penetration of Canada by Indian intelligence in the 1980s.

The letter cites both Zuhair Kashmeri and Brian McAndrew's excellent book *Soft Target* and former Canadian Member of Parliament David Kilgour's book *Betrayal: The Spy That Canada Forgot*. Both show India's responsibility for the bombing. Kashmeri and McAndrew cite the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), which said, "if you really want to clear the incidents quickly, take vans to the Indian High Commission and the consulates in Toronto and Vancouver, load up everybody and take them down for questioning. We know it and they know it that they are involved."

Kilgour writes that a Canadian-Polish double agent was approached by an East German named Udo Ulbrecht, who was working with people affiliated with the Indian government, to participate in a second bombing, but he declined to be part of it and the plot never came off. Dr. Sekhon rightly asks why neither Kashmeri, McAndrew, nor Kilgour has been asked to testify in the current inquiry. He also requests that the Indian diplomatic and intelligence personnel who were declared persona non grata in Canada in the wake of the Air India bombing be summoned back to testify before the inquiry.

He notes the mass killings of Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, Assamese, Tamils, and other non-Brahmin minorities by the Indian government. Their effort to portray the Sikhs, especially those who speak out peacefully and democratically for an independent Khalistan, as terrorists is a pretext for this "ethnic cleansing."

He quotes my colleague, the gentleman from California, who said in this chamber that for Sikhs and Kashmiris, "India might as well be Nazi Germany." The late General Narinder Singh said that Punjab was a police state. This has been an extension of the India government's strategy that was outlined in a memo in 1947 in which India's first Home Minister V.B. Patel described the Sikhs as "a lawless people" and "a criminal tribe." In other words, the Indian government was trying to discredit and destroy the Sikhs almost from the moment of independence.

Madam Speaker, the time has come to stop our aid and trade with this repressive regime and to demand self-determination for the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan, the Muslims of Kashmir, the Christians of Nagalim, and all the people seeking freedom in South Asia. The essence of democracy is the right to self-determination, not an ongoing half-century effort to kill your minority citizens.

I would like to place Dr. Sekhon's letter into the RECORD at this time for the information of my colleagues.

THE SIKH EDUCATIONAL TRUST,
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SIKH
AFFAIRS,

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, May 9, 2007.

Ret Air India Flight 182 (Toronto–Montreal–London–Delhi),

June, 23 1985: Enquiry of Justice John Major

DEAR SIR, My writing to you relates with some minor and major comments related to the subject, and also on "Air India's Shared Tragedy Lost in the 'SILOS' between two nations by George Abraham (The Edmonton Journal, 8th May, 2007)."

I would like to comment on Abraham's writing "Prime Minister (Brian) Mulroney had telephoned his condolences to his Indian counterpart, Rajiv Gandhi—an act that was based on a fundamental misunderstanding of who, exactly, had been victimized, and who, in fact, was to blame." Mr. Abraham seems to be in the grip of part of the problem. As a Canadian national and belonging to the Canadian Sikh community, it appears to me that 'telephoning to the prime minister of a country, which had betrayed Canada and the international community in 1974 (explosion of a nuclear device prepared from the by-product of a Candu reactor technology for peaceful and medical purposes) by the Right Hon. Prime Minister of Canada' was far more important than about 90 percent of the Canadian passengers of the ill-fated aircraft. It, certainly, is new information that has come out in Justice Major's enquiry. What a pity our Canadian prime minister, who put Rajiv Gandhi first rather than thinking and offering his condolences to the Canadian Sikhs and the victimized families. This act of Prime Minister Mulroney will never be forgotten by the Canadian Sikhs. Earlier, his predecessor, Charles Joseph Clark, had said to the journalists that "if you want more information about Sikhs, go and call these numbers (of the Indian Consulate Toronto and High Commission in Ottawa):" What an unacceptable act of the prime minister, who hands out the telephone numbers of a foreign mission to get information about Canadian Sikhs. Should we, the Canadian Sikhs who have been in Canada over a century, imply that our Canadian administration has no idea of its Sikh Canadians; or, a foreign mission in Canada has more information about the Canadian Sikhs, especially when the Indian Constitution 1950, Article 25, has eliminated the 'Sikh Identity and Sikh Faith'. The latter is one of the six major faiths of our world.

Does George Abraham know that Mani Shanker Iyer, an Indian diplomat, said, "In early 1984, to the hearing of all, mentioned that at the instance of Indira Gandhi, he was given an unpleasant job of portraying Sikhs as terrorists." A few days later, Iyer stated that, "against his wishes he had done the job?" This was before "Operation Bluestar, the orders for which had been delivered in January 1984" (The Sikh Bulletin, October–November 2005, p. 11; *editor@sikhbulletin.com*).

Based on the two previous enquiries and the present one which is going on, it appears to me that nothing extraordinary will come from these enquiries, because the major things which might yield substantial information and which might reveal the real cause of the 'Air India Explosion of Flight 182' will never find a place in the enquiry that is going on. Some of the points that, as I believe, have not been discussed so far, are summarized below:

1. Why Mr. Zuhair Kashmeri and Mr. Brian McAndrew, two Canadian journalists, who gave their views in their title, *Soft Target India's Intelligence Service and its Role in The Air India Disaster 1989* first ed. and 2005 second ed. ISBN 10:1-55028-904-7 and 13: 978-1-55028-904-6, have not been called to testify before the enquiry commission?